



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# News Release

*Pacific Islands External Affairs Office*

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## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Will Consider 7 Species of Hawaiian Yellow-faced Bees for Protection

After reviewing petitions to list seven species of Hawaiian yellow-faced bees as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that the documents present substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that listing may be warranted, and will initiate a 12-month review of the species' status. The 12-month finding will determine if the petitioned action is warranted.

On March 23, 2009, the Service received five petitions from the Executive Director of the Xerces Society requesting that the Service list seven species of Hawaiian yellow-faced bees as endangered and designate critical habitat for the species. On May 8, 2009, a letter was sent to the Executive Director of the Xerces Society acknowledging the receipt of the petitions. At that time, the Service determined that emergency listing was not warranted.

According to the petitions, degradation and loss of coastal and lowland habitat on all of the main Hawaiian Islands is the primary threat to these seven species. Coastal and lowland habitats have been severely altered and degraded because of past and present land management practices such as agriculture, grazing, and urban development; the deliberate and accidental introductions of nonnative animals and plants; and recreational activities. Fire was also indicated as a potential threat to the habitat of these species in some locations.

"As pollinators of native plant communities, bees fulfill an essential role in the health of our native ecosystems," said Loyal Mehroff, field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. "These species are likely critical pollinators of one or more native Hawaiian plant species; their continued decline or eventual extinction may negatively impact native plant species."

The seven species belong to the Hawaiian *Hylaeus* genus which is part of the Colletidae family of bees, also known as plasterer bees due to their habit of lining their nests with salival secretions. The family is comprised of over 2,000 species, all of which are solitary nesters - unlike social wasps and bees. *Hylaeus* is a large, globally-distributed genus comprised of over 500 species worldwide. Relatively small in size compared to other bees, the genus is widespread and very diverse in the Hawaiian Islands, with 60 native species, including 20 that are endemic (found nowhere else) to single islands. *Hylaeus* bees are commonly known as yellow-faced bees or masked bees, for their yellow to white facial markings.

The current distribution of the seven species of yellow-faced bees varies from lower elevation coastal and dry shrubland habitats to mid-elevation (up to 3,000 ft.) mesic and wet forest habitats. *Hylaeus facilis* is found on the islands of O'ahu, Moloka'i, and Maui. *Hylaeus longiceps* is found on the islands of O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i and Maui. *Hylaeus anthracinus* is found on the islands of O'ahu, Moloka'i, Kaho'olawe, Hawai'i and Maui. *Hylaeus assimulans* is found on the islands Kaho'olawe, Lana'i and Maui. *Hylaeus hiliaris* is found on the island of Moloka'i. *Hylaeus kuakea* is known from only two

collections within the Waianae Mountains of O‘ahu, and *Hylaeus mana* is only known to occur in the Ko‘olau Mountains of O‘ahu.

The Service is soliciting data and other information regarding the species to ensure a comprehensive review. We request that information you submit be received by August 16, 2010.

To ensure that the status review is comprehensive, the Service is seeking information regarding:

- the historical and current status and distribution, biology, ecology and ongoing conservation measures for each of the species and their habitat;
- the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the species habitat or range;
- overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
- disease or predation;
- the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms;
- other natural and manmade factors affecting the species continued existence;
- information on management programs affecting the species;
- factors that pose a threat to the species and the potential cumulative effects of these factors;
- whether insect collecting presents a threat to any of the species;
- the potential cumulative effects of these factors that may threaten or endanger the species;
- management programs for the conservation of the species; and
- the potential effects of climate change on the species and their habitat.

Comments can be sent by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal* at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Via U.S. mail or hand delivery to Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R1-ES-2010-0012; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222, Arlington, VA 22203.

Comments and materials provided by the public, including names and home addresses of respondents are available for public review. Respondents may request that the Service withhold their identity, to the extent allowable by law. Anonymous comments will not be considered. Comments received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office.

Information and materials received, as well as supporting documentation used in preparing this finding, are available for review at <http://www.regulations.gov>, or you may make an appointment during normal business hours at the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. Copies of the *Federal Register* notice may be downloaded from the Service’s website at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>. Copies are also available by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service office in Honolulu at 808 792-9400.

For further information contact: Loyal Mehroff, Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96850; telephone 808 792 9400 or fax 808 792 9581.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

**Note to Editors:** Images are available by calling Ken Foote at 808 792-9535